THE TWO GREAT CANYONS

A. Dean and Jean M. Larsen
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Excerpts From
Letters Written on a Western
Journey

BY
Cyrenus Cole

Cedar Rapids, Iowa
The Torch Press
Nineteen Hundred Eight

UPB

To Mrs. N. D. Pope
of Lake Charles, Louisiana,

These excerpts from letters written for the Cedar Rapids Republican and Evening Times are dedicated, because she made all the ways pleasant ones and all the places happy ones for three men—one of whom is her husband

I

YELLOWSTONE National Park, Mammoth Springs Hotel, August 14, 1908: We have reached the first hotel station on the tour of the Yellowstone National Park, which, according to the legend on the arch over the entrance, has been set aside "For the benefit and enjoyment of the people." We left Minneapolis on the night train and found ourselves the next morning in the wheat country, on the state lines of Minnesota and North Dakota. In the wheat country there is nothing impressive, except the magnificent distances. As far as the eye can reach, and that is very far, one sees a level expanse, covered with wheat, some in the shock and some still on the stalk. The towns, also, lack impressiveness. Most of them are mere wheat stations. Fargo and Bismarck and Mandan are, however, not without commercial and historic interest.

At Bismarck, I recalled what Mr. Bryce

wrote in "The American Commonwealth." He was present, in 1883, when the corner stone of the state house was laid, with imposing ceremonies, General U. S. Grant and "Sitting Bull" being among the honored guests. Mr. Bryce records that one of the orators upon that occasion remarked that Bismarck was destined to "be the metropolitan hearth of the world's civilization." Mr. Bryce says he asked why the state house was "not in the city," but "a mile off, on the top of a hill in the brown and dusty prairie," and he was told, by the enthusiastic spirits of the place, that in a few years that hill would be the center of the city that was to be. But the state house still stands out of town. Many hopes in real estate are unrealized, but let us hope they have only been deferred. A hundred years from now all the open country may be teeming with populations. In much of the wheat country there are no country homes, only places in which the wheat growers live long enough to plant and to gather their crops. The wheat fields end in the Bad Lands, and these would not be so interesting, were they not so dreary. On the Little Missouri one begins to see patches of alfalfa. It was on this river

that Theodore Roosevelt ranched, equipped with a college diploma and his indomitable spirit. One ascends gradually into the mountains, up the Yellowstone River, to Livingston, where they break the transcontinental journey for the Yellowstone National Park trip. It is fifty-five miles from Livingston to Gardner and five or six miles from Gardner to the Mammoth Springs Hotel, the last five miles being covered by stages.

The hotel is crowded. People are coming and going. They jostle each other and rush about frantically, looking for baggage and worried about many things. Those who have "done" the Park are anxious to get away, and those who are about to "do it" are as anxious to be on their way. All sorts and conditions of people are here, the aged and the young, the rich and the poor, women always predominating in numbers and in activity. The postal card fad is at its height here. The postage that is paid on these trifles ought to pay the government a dividend on the money it has invested in the Park.

II.

YELLOWSTONE National Park, Old Faithful Inn, August 15: It has been raining in the Park. The weather has been lowering before a blustering wind, with snow and sleet. People sat shivering in the stage coaches today, but they tell us we are more fortunate than those who have been compelled to make the journey in the dust. Mr. Jones and Mr. Pope came in dusters, but they have donned their overcoats, instead. Every one who has made the tour of the Park thinks he can tell you all about it, but the truth is that no one knows anything about the weather here, it is so variable and there is so much of it. It is clearing now and every one is buoyant. It is sunshine after a storm that makes people happy, especially the women. They like sunshine.

This inn is an interesting point in the journey. It is built entirely out of logs, seven stories high, at the peak. It has

great fire places and a rustic dining room, where the food begins to taste "shippy." In these places one's appetite always craves the things that are not placed before you. Resort hotels are the most contrary places in the world. The name of the inn is taken from that of the geyser, the largest now in action in the Park basin, Old Faithful, so named because it gives an exhibition every hour. The water is thrown a hundred feet in the air and the spray that accompanies it, and the vapor, are beautiful to see. The basin, in front of the hotel, is filled with miniature geysers and in whichever direction one looks he can see vapor rising from crevices. In many places the crust is thin and treacherous. Some of the pools have the most delicate formations and the most exquisite colorings, comparable with nothing except the colors in precious stones. Some are green and some are blue and some are like morning glories. The smell of sulphur is in the air. There are also the ugly things, mud geysers, unwholesome holes bubbling with and spouting out mud, like toads. Some people insist on seeing every crevice. They tramp about until they are all tired out. That is what they call "doing" the

Park. The poor Park, and the poorer mortals! But to me it seems easier and better to sit down quietly and absorb the spirit of things. The mountains clad with the green timber, the rich blue sky, fleeced with delicate clouds, over all. It is a great joy to be in the midst of these natural wonders. Why weary one's self with the details? Why make it a place of weariness? It is a great picture gallery of the gods. Here they have left unfinished the work of creation. But people go through it, rushing about it as about bargain counters in the stores.

III.

YELLOWSTONE National Park, Lake Hotel, August 15, 1908: We left Old Faithful Inn this morning with some regrets. One could spend several days there with profit. The inn itself is comfortable and the surroundings attractive. We have had the misfortune to be overtaken by a party of excursionists, who entered the Park from the west. An excursionist is an uninteresting traveler. He is apt to be some one who is traveling because the rates are cheap. The regular tourists were very much put out by the overcrowding. But if one wants to be alone, or with a few friends, he must not follow the beaten paths of the Park.

There are many ways of traveling in vogue. The easiest way is by the stages of the transportation company, which owns and operates the hotels. In the hotels one is apt to get a good bed and, sometimes, a bath. The food served in the dining

rooms is of the conventional hotel variety. All the supplies are brought into the Park in heavy freight wagons. Most of the things are taken out of cans, but a few fresh vegetables are supplied from gardens cultivated by the hotel company. The milk also is fresh, drawn from cows kept in the Park. Cheaper modes of travel and subsistence are supplied by camping outfits. One company maintains a series of permanent camps, and others use movable camps, carrying all their bedding and their utensils with them from place to place. But whichever way one travels, he is apt to pick up many friends. Friendships, in fact, are easily made in the Park. For the time they seem very real, and partings at the end of a journey seem almost like partings with old friends. It all comes from the fact that the people one meets here are, for the time being, all the people there are in this little miniature world.

But we are still leaving Old Faithful Inn, so far as this letter is concerned. The regrets that many felt in leaving the inn were increased by the disagreeableness of the weather outside. It was a miserable rainy morning. It drizzled all the time and, intermittently, there were downpours

of water. It fell to my lot to ride on the outside of the coach, with the driver, which is a very choice seat in fair weather. When it is rainy, the ladies, and the ladies' men always prefer to ride inside. But there is so much chattering inside, often about nothing, that a quiet man prefers to be outside, even in the rain. The driver is a good fellow. He does not talk much. He is too intent on watching his horses moving on a slippery road, often around abrupt curves. The four fine chestnut horses were real good company, so intelligent and so willing and so eager. It was hard work this morning to pull the coach, for there was a gradual ascent, from one hundred to two hundred feet to the mile. Plenty of clear water was running in the mountain streams. We crossed the continental divide, at an elevation of about 8,300 feet, but we soon recrossed the line and found ourselves once more on the Atlantic slope. The driver pointed out many objects of interest, among them Shoshone Lake, resting in the laps of mountain peaks, a beautiful body of water. But the persons inside the coach seemed oblivious to many things, except the mileposts which they counted, audibly, with great regularity —

there were thirty-four of them to count to the next lodging place. And it rained all the time!

It was on this part of the journey that I learned most about the animal life in the Park. It was one of the things in which the driver was interested. There is all manner of life in the Park, from weasels to antlered deer and bear, and in the air, birds from the tiniest creatures picking their livings in the pine trees, to the stately waterfowls that strut about in seven league boots. All the birds and animals; all the creatures that crawl and burrow in the earth, or that fly in the air, are protected by the omnipotent arm of the government in Washington. The soldiers who patrol the Park are the only ones who are allowed to bring guns into the preserve. Not a shot is fired to break the stillness of the surroundings. The squirrels romp in the tree tops and the beavers carry on their prodigious works just as they did before there was a man on this continent. Here the foxes have holes in the ground and the birds have nests in the trees, and there is no one to disturb them. The results are wonderful. The birds and animals hardly know what fear is, they seem

so greatly unconcerned about the presence of passing people. Here they find

"No enemy
But winter and rough weather,"

and of these they find a great deal during the winter months. The tinges of winter are already in the air, even in August, for winter comes early on this high elevation and when it comes it is severe, the mercury falling to forty degrees below zero and the snow piling up to depths of ten or twelve feet.

On our thirty-four mile journey we were shown many objects of interest, pools the bottoms of which rival the rarest flowers and gems in their colorings. But also some ugly things, mud geysers, filthy and bad smelling. At noon we halted for luncheon at one end of the Yellowstone Lake, and some persons took boats, making the rest of the day's journey by water. We reached the Lake Hotel at about four o'clock in the afternoon, tired enough to appreciate the comforts and hospitalities of the place. This hotel is one of the best in the Park, lighted by electricity and heated with steam, the rooms all cheerful ones. The meals in the dining room, also, were good. The lake itself is a wonderful body

of water, considering its extent and its elevation. The tops of the mountains stand all around it. It lies in the hollows formed between mountain ranges. But aside from these features, it is not more interesting than other bodies of water.

After the rains, the sun went down in mountain splendors. How good it seemed to see the light flooding through the breaking clouds! We have been very anxious about the sun for tomorrow is our day at the Canyon of the Yellowstone and there, if anywhere, one needs the sun to bring out the colors. I have heard so much about this Canyon, since coming to the Park, and read so much about it before coming here, that I am very anxious to see it and to measure it with my expectations. So far, I must confess, nothing has exceeded my expectations, and much has fallen far below them. The things as they are, often play havoc with the things as we have imagined them.

IV.

YELLOWSTONE National Park, Canyon Hotel, August 16: We were not disappointed in the weather today. A rarer Sunday morning never dawned, not even in the mountains. There were still some remnant clouds in the sky. Fortunately, too, these did not disappear entirely. All day bits of fleecy clouds floated between the sun and the earth, not enough to darken, but just enough for contrasts. The air was bracing and there was plenty of it.

As usual, our coach led all the rest. Forty or fifty came trailing behind. Every one was filled with persons in high glee and in great expectations. The road was a winding one along the Yellowstone River, up ridges and dipping down into hollows, with many a curve and a few short angles, the rolling and tumbling river nearly always in sight. The river is the outlet for the lake, or rather, the lake is but an ex-

tension, in width, of the river, forming a large reservoir for the waters from the mountains and from the springs, thus insuring a constant flow for the river.

After leaving the lake, the waters in the river flow on as they do in any other river, leisurely and calmly. The water is wonderfully clear, coming from the snows in the mountains. The rocky bottoms of the river are visible from the tops of the coaches and fishes may often be seen swimming and darting about. Across the river there is a gradual ascent of ground, until it forms a skyline of miniature mountain peaks. There are vast mountain meadows clothed in grays and browns, autumn colors mingled with the colors of the sage. It makes an indescribable color and the effect of it also is an indescribable one. On our own side of the river we are riding through endless beds of flowers, the kind of beds that nature makes in a large and liberal country. Their colors are blue and purple and red. Of mountain daisies, yellow flowers on delicate stems, there are millions. The flowers alone would be worth coming to see, to say nothing of the furzy mountain meadows, like vast oriental rugs spread out by the hand of a generous God!

The water in the river is green, when it flows over beds of moss and black and foreboding when it runs under the shadows of the overhanging rocks. As we proceed on our journey, these projecting rocks become more numerous. The banks gradually grow more precipitous and the channel, narrower. The waters grow more disturbed. Signs of some impending catastrophe to the river multiply. The waters now roll and surge. From side to side they dash themselves against the rocks, filling the air with a spray. The river becomes furious and it makes a great commotion. Finally, in one great dash the waters rush over the upper falls, a distance of one hundred and ten feet down. Then, imprisoned in a narrow gorge, seething and foaming and roaring, they rush forward until they come to the lower falls, where they make a spectacular descent of three hundred and six feet, filling the air with foam and spray and the scene with glory, all the way down. The whole thing is God-like, that is the only phrase that can describe it. God-like in power, in beauty and in majesty.

The lower falls is the beginning of the greater glory of the Yellowstone river. At

the bottom of the gorge the tumultuous waters continue on their way, so far down that what is a river looks like a yellow ribbon. From the river bed the gorge widens and makes the magnificent spectacle of the Canyon of the Yellowstone river. If such a gorge had been cut in the dullest stone, it would be an awe-inspiring thing, but cut through rocks of the brightest hues the scene is bewildering, amazing and enthralling. And the longer you look at it, the more the wonder grows. What at first appears to be a wild riot of colors, yellow predominating, becomes a fabric of the most delicate colorings, blended as nature blends colors and softened as time softens them. There is no color and no shade that is missing. There is as much there as the eye has time or capacity to develop. No one has seen it all, no one will ever see it all. Each man sees but a fraction and a fragment of it. All the eyes of the world cast into one with all time at its command could not exhaust the possibilities of the combinations in forms and colors.

Here, I thought, is the one place where no traveler can be disappointed, no dreamer disillusioned. Here the things that are, are more than the things imagined. This

is the transformation scene of all the earth. This is the one great masterpiece in nature, perfect in all its details, endless in all its combinations of colors and forms, imposing in its grandeur. As I looked at it, I felt that nature had nothing more to say to me and that in the way of scenery my heart had nothing more to long for. Here is the throne of majesty in the temple of the beautiful. With unuttered thoughts in his mind and unfinished sentences on his lips, one must turn away from the Canyon of the Yellowstone.

Monday morning, when we rode away from the scene, a dense fog hung over the river. Others were coming where we were leaving. Our day's journey was back to the Mammoth Springs Hotel. For us the Park was a finished book, however many the pages which we had skipped, and however imperfectly we may have read the few passages that fell under our eyes. Streams and meadows, cliffs and mountain peaks covered with snow, lined the way outward bound, but it seemed to me that, somehow, the falling of the waters and the glimmering of the colors of the Canyon, dimmed all other things.

V

SEATTLE, Washington, August 19: After spending a few hours in Livingston, which has a sightly location, at the mouth of a canyon and in sight of a mountain on which the snow lies for ten months in the year, we proceeded westward. From Montana we passed into Idaho, where the tree butchers are cutting up the last remnants of the white pine. It is, for the most part, a dreary country, where the timber has been cut over and where forest fires have left masses of charred stumpage. Waste everywhere and nothing but waste! The American lumberman in the past has picked out the best and left the rest to the desolation that follows the man with the axe and the torch. It has been the working out of the practical American idea of getting the most money with the least care about the future. It is pity and disgust and indignation that one feels. But such are the ravages of

commerce in a commercial era among a commercial people.

The next day we reached Spokane, on the other side of the Rockies, mistress of a vast industrial area, reaching up into the mountains on one side, with their mines and their lumber, and stretching out over the Washington wheat fields, on the other. A great city, the creation of a few years, but to the casual traveler, more or less uninteresting, broiling and sizzling in the August sun, treeless, for the most part, and to that extent cheerless. But the volume of business transacted is large and the business buildings are fine and the people, grown richer, are building new houses and surrounding themselves with the luxuries which American people everywhere seek after and prize.

Leaving Spokane, going westward, one enters the great wheat country, a plateau lying between the Rocky Mountains and the coast ranges. Where the railroads run, the country is more or less rough, with here and there formations that suggest "bad lands," but much of the country is level and productive. It is a vast treeless region; rainless in summer. The mercury rises as high as 100 in the night time.

When the wind blows, which it is apt to do, dust fills the air. Much of the soil seems to be as fine as flour and very light when it is very dry. We rode for hours without seeing a drop of water, in creek or lake. What a precious thing water must be to the people — in summer time, when they need it most! There are no homes in these wheat fields. Here and there are scattered hovels which the sowers and the reapers use in their seasons, but no permanent abodes. Wire fences are stretched across the fields, far apart. How different it all is from the farming countries of the Mississippi Valley, with their well fenced farms, the homes of the farmers in the midst of groves and orchards and the grazing herds of cattle and flocks of sheep. Here and there one saw a horseman riding in a pillar of dust. The trails of dust one sees are the only evidences of highways, or of travel. It is a great wheat producing country, when it has been revived by the rains of winter, but the men who grow that wheat ought to be well paid for their labors. It was night when we reached the Columbia River, the mighty stream that wends across these wheat fields, deep down in its channel, so deep that the use of its

waters for purposes of irrigation seems almost hopeless. The winds that blow across the plateau may solve the question.

Seattle is a marvel in the way of city building. It is growing in every direction and in every way. Located on a great inland sea, in sight of the mountains and blest with a climate of wonderful evenness, at the end of the great transcontinental railways and where the large vessels are loaded and unloaded for the orient and the coastwise trade, the destiny of this city can hardly be overdrawn. Seattle has absorbed the major energies of the American northwest. The men who founded the city laid out its streets in almost impossible places, but modern engineering is cutting down the hills and filling up the hollows. There is no end to the enterprise of the people in these respects. Every breath one breathes in Seattle is a city breath. Men from the prairies of Iowa have become city builders in Seattle. Industrial reverses may overtake them, they likely will, and their winters are said to be atrociously foggy and wet, but they are going to make Seattle a place of which all Americans will be proud, one of the great commercial cities of the Pacific Ocean.

VI

SAN FRANCISCO, August 24: After spending a few days in Seattle we started southward, with Los Angeles as the end of our journeying in that direction. Tacoma has been out-distanced by Seattle, but it is itself a great and growing city. Portland, in Oregon, is a city of older appearances than Seattle. It has more leisure and more culture and, perhaps, more realized riches. It has a great river, mountains around it and the ocean only a few miles away. Portland is building for the future and the growth of Pacific Ocean commerce is in the dreams of all the business men.

On the way to San Francisco we rode up the Rogue River valley, which we found not equal to its fame, and around Mount Shasta, grand and glorious in the sunshine that fell around its snow-covered peak. The next morning we were in the wheat belt of California, the wonderful Sacramento Val-

ley. In August it is barren enough, nothing green in it except the fields of alfalfa, an occasional plum orchard and the wonderful live oaks scattered over the landscapes, always with the range of mountains in the perspective. Wheat growing in these valleys has about reached its limit. The continual cropping has left the soil impoverished and there is talk of cutting up the big ranches into individual small farms, watered artificially. What there may come out of this form of development is problematical. Some persons who had lived in the valley assured us that the heat is often so intense that it scalds the fruit on the trees. On the western slope of the coast range the climate is much better for fruit and also for gardening. Incidentally, it may be remarked that the American is hardly the race that will develop this form of intensive farming. They want to do things on a bigger scale and they shun the manual labor that is necessary to make it successful. Portugese colonies are said to be prospering in the culture of fruit and the Japanese also are making headway. They are willing to do such work and to do it for wages that are not considered adequate by Americans. Under present

conditions nothing seems to me more hopeless than the establishment of fruit farms, by American farmers from the Mississippi Valley, in the valley of the Sacramento, the Rogue River or even the Yakima and the Yellowstone.

San Francisco has recovered marvelously from the earthquake and the fire. It is a city in the process of rebuilding and the rebuilding is all along greater and better lines. Old Chinatown is no longer a city of rookeries, but of substantial brick and steel, with shops that would do credit to any city. The haunts of vice are fewer and the old devotees of oriental vices complain bitterly that the "town" has lost its "atmosphere." If it has, it is so much for the better. San Francisco has been hampered and handicapped, but its business men are striving to retain the commerce of the Pacific for which so many other cities are now striving and for which Seattle has made so much headway.

VII

LOS ANGELES, August 27: At San Francisco our party was broken up. Mr. Jones and I proceeded to Los Angeles, while Mr. and Mrs. Pope elected to linger longer in that city and to make many breaks in their journey, to visit the seaside resorts.

Southern California in August is not an inviting place. There is drouth, and dust. The famed orchards are simply patches of trees in plowed ground, the trees covered with dust as well as with ripening fruit. When we think of orchards at home, we think of beautiful plats of grass, with trees. But that is not the California idea. They are far from being sylvan dreams. They are places for hard work and, from all reports, meager incomes. To pick and pack peaches for distant markets is laborious and hazardous. The vineyards were filled with distress over grapes at six dollars a ton. But in the real estate offices in Los

Angeles, rosier views of fruit growing were to be had and that freely. Los Angeles is city mad. They have done wonders and they think of the future without dismay. All things seem possible to the promoters. On the one side they have "the back country" where the products are going to enrich all the people and on the other side they have the ocean on which they are going to carry the commerce of the orient, all paying tribute to Los Angeles. The ocean, at Long Beach and other points is beautiful, restful and invigorating, but the great ships have found no harbors in the vicinity of Los Angeles. The harbors must be made artificially and the commerce must be wrested away from San Francisco, Portland and Seattle and Tacoma. It will be a great struggle for supremacy. No American can ride down this great Pacific coast line without feelings of pride in the developments of this western country. It is all American, intensely American. They call it the Golden West, but the man who has to work for a living finds the conditions no easier here than "back east." In many places he finds it harder, for he has Japanese competition and the climate of which they boast so much makes men lazy.

VIII

EL TOVAR, Grand Canyon, Arizona, September 3: We left Los Angeles yesterday morning. It was without any regrets that we turned our faces homeward. California in September has no charms that can be compared with those of September in Iowa.

From Los Angeles to San Bernardino is a matter of two hours, through the San Gabriel Valley, one of the famous valleys of the state. We were rather disappointed. Where we had expected to see an unbroken succession of cultivated groves and gardens, we found half of the land still in sage brush. Like most of the far west, the land is cultivated in spots only. They said there was not enough water for all the fields. After leaving San Bernardino we went through a mountain pass and emerged, early in the afternoon, on the fringes of the Mojave desert, perhaps the dreariest area on the American continent.

Hundreds of miles of utter barrenness! The famous Death Valley, 400 feet below the top of the ocean, is part of this desert. It is on this journey that one learns the value of water. Water, the great alchemist, the creator and sustainer of life. How men and women follow the water, here in the semi-arid west! There is no place in the mountains where a bit of a stream trickles down that human beings are not found. A little house, a little garden, and a cow, all gathered about that bit of water which is all of life to them. In these regions water is everything and even real estate men do not sell land, but water. A hot, dusty, disagreeable ride this is, through the Mojave desert. Nothing of the kind could be worse. We were favored, too, for all afternoon thunder clouds were toying with mountain peaks, black clouds and vivid lightning and the deep reverberations of thunder — all so suggestive of copious falls of water, but only once did our train succeed in overtaking one of these showers. And of what use is a shower in a desert?

We retired for the night, after we had passed the Needles, on the Colorado River, between California and Arizona. When

we arose in the morning we were in a green country again. The desert had faded away and trees and flowers had come in again. Strange freak of nature, that the clouds should pass over the intervening desert and drop their moisture in central Arizona, where July and August are the rainy months of the year. It was good to see the trees again, the big trees, and the grass and the flowers in the green fields. Our train reached Williams early in the morning. From Williams it is sixty miles to the rim of the Canyon, a side journey which one can make in the comfort of a Pullman car. I had heard so much about the Grand Canyon that I was afraid to look at it, though now within a stone's throw of it — afraid of being disappointed. The disillusionments had been so many on this western journey, so many things had proved to be less than they had been reported in the guide books and in the letters of travelers that I was minded to save one dreamed of great thing from the wrecks of travel, at least a little while longer. So we sat down to breakfast first — the Grand Canyon would wait.

It was a beautiful morning, the heavens filled with sunshine, with just enough of

autumn in it to give it a dreamy effect. Fifty steps from the hotel brought us to the rim of the canyon. Those fifty steps took one into a new world. Unlike mountains and oceans, unlike anything else in the world, is this first view of the great gorge which is called the Grand Canyon of the Colorado River. In that first moment one is bewildered — and still disappointed. One had anticipated a more instantaneous grandeur. But what is a first look here? Nothing, we learned afterwards. It is nothing more than a blinding of the eyes, a numbing of the senses. Before one lies an unutterable immensity of things that is appalling. You think you see everything, and yet you see nothing. You simply realize that you are looking on something that is beyond you, out of your grasp, out of your reach, beyond your comprehension. There is a certain dizziness in the air that you look through. The earth has suddenly opened up before you and instead of seeing mountains lifted in the air you see them in the earth beneath you. Everything is at first without form and void. It is a dream, a fantasy of the mind. But as you linger and look longer, gradually things begin to assume forms

and shapes and they begin to be real. Objects begin to express themselves in colors also, in great masses of colors, all colors and all variations of all colors. It is a creation that is going on before you. The void begins to be filled with all manner of formations. It is some such hour as when God said, "Let there be light, and there was light." In those first moments we are present at another creation, and it is a creation, that is enacted for every one who comes to partake of the glories of this canyon. To attempt to describe it further would be like trying to weave a garland of roses around a star.

The learned of the world, the poets, the painters and the writers have lingered on this same rim, not for a day, but for weeks, charmed, fascinated, bewildered, enthralled, but without being able to reproduce either in colors or in words what they saw. Each one has picked up a bit of color, where there are oceans of color. The scientist knows that through countless ages the waters of the Colorado River have cut this gorge into the earth, through the solid rock and the drifting sand alike. It is a mile deep, thirteen miles from rim to rim and over two hundred miles long. At the

bottom of the gorge flows the creator of this wonderful masterpiece of nature, the Colorado River. It is a dashing, roaring river, maddened in its fury to get to the level of the ocean, through unnumbered obstructions, but of all the fury with which it lashes its sides, there is not a murmur that reaches you standing at the rim of the canyon — the river is a mile below you and six miles away. The deathlike stillness of dead ages hangs over the canyon. Before Christ was, before Adam was, this work was completed. Still a mighty river, in those primeval days the Colorado must have been infinitely mightier to have removed the mountains that stood in its course. To wear away the solid stone, disintegrate it and, in solution, to carry it with its own waters to the ocean, that was the work that the Colorado River had to perform to make this bed for itself. In the Mojave desert the thought came to us, how precious is water, the life of the world; here the thought comes to us, how mighty are the waters when they are assembled together, the might of the world. There glistening in the rainbow above the barren mountain peaks; here roaring in their fury,

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dark and mirky and foreboding at the bottom of the gorge.

As at the Yellowstone Canyon, so here every step brings a new view of the canyon. It is not the same from any two points of observation. Of its mere immensity one can form no adequate idea. The opposite side looks hardly a mile off, but it is thirteen miles, in fact. All of Pike's Peak might be tumbled into it and hardly make a dam to hold the waters back. In the drowsiness of the afternoon's sun I thought one of the mountains that stand in the bottom of the canyon looked like a huge pulpit. I thought I saw terrace rise above terrace, up the slopes, and fifty miles up and down the river. I thought how all the nations of the earth might be gathered there and seated, and how an archangel might speak to them and be heard by all. Not only terraces, but temples, pagodas, castles, battleships, everything that one has ever seen that is great or grand seems to be reproduced in this canyon, in such varied ways has the water chiseled itself upon the rocks. Every conceivable form of things, every imaginable color, has been worked out in this great gorge. The sun goes down upon it, throwing the shadows of ragged

peaks across yawning chasms, multiplying the awfulness of things seen. The full sun can not light the depths of it. In the darkness of the night one walks on the rim of this canyon as on the shores of some unexplored world, a world still in the process of creation.

Day after day, little parties of sightseers go down into the canyon, down Bright Angel trail, on the backs of donkeys. It is thirteen miles by the trail and then the river is still far below them, so far that they can hardly hear the noise it makes between its rocky banks.

Many had said that when one has seen the Grand Canyon he has forgotten all about the Canyon of the Yellowstone. But I did not find it so. Nothing can ever make me forget the Canyon of the Yellowstone. The two canyons are so different and so distinct that comparisons are not possible, but contrasts are. In the Grand Canyon the colors are heavier; in the Yellowstone Canyon the colors have the brightness of the butterfly. The one is compact, the other immense. The one is definite, conceivable and comprehensible; the other indefinite, inconceivable and incomprehensible. The one produces the sen-

sations of nearness and dearness; the other of aloofness and vagueness. The one is like a beautiful woman arrayed in many colors; the other like an angel clothed in austerity.

When one has seen these two canyons, the west has nothing more to offer him in the way of scenery. They sum up all the wonders that nature has wrought in these cyclopean regions of the continent. One wants to see them again, to see them many times again. In the last year of his life he might desire to take a last look at them. And, if in the providence of the theologians, we are all translated into angels, for one I shall often be tempted to desert the glories celestial for these glories terrestial, to hover over the scene where the Yellowstone River tumbles over its precipices into the gorgeous depths below and where the Colorado River roars at the bottom of the canyon which is the creation of its own might and fury.

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